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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to help workplace trainers in the textile, clothing, and footwear (TCF) industry to become more aware of the language, literacy, and numeracy demands of training. It is divided into two main sections. Section 1, "Background Information," covers understanding language, literacy, and numeracy; understanding training in the TCF industry; and identifying language, literacy, and numeracy skills. Section 2, "Strategies for Trainers," addresses preparing for training; delivering training--catering for different needs and developing language, literacy, and numeracy skills; and assessing trainees. Each of these sections is divided into parts that contain information and/or strategies for trainers to use and examples from trainers and others in the TCF industry. Appendixes include a list of 19 organizations which can provide information on workplace training; a list of suggested courses for language, literacy, and numeracy; an annotated list of 11 language, literacy, and numeracy resources; and a list of 9 bookshops. (YLB)

MADE TO MEASURE

Language, Literacy and Numeracy in TCF Industry Training

A Guide for Workplace Trainers

Sue Patterson

H. Joyce

2B

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Introduction

Who should read this guide?

The guide has been written for workplace trainers who work in the TCF industry. It may also interest managers, industry consultants and teachers of vocational subjects for the TCF industry.

As a workplace trainer you probably know a lot about the workplace and about training in the workplace. But you may not always feel confident about identifying and meeting the language, literacy and numeracy needs of your trainees. This guide is intended to help you with this.

Why has the guide been written?

The guide has been written to help workplace trainers to be more aware of the language, literacy and numeracy demands of training in the TCF industry.

It has been written to help you as a trainer to:

- identify the language, literacy and numeracy skills and needs of your trainees and to use this information to decide on suitable training strategies
- adapt your training to meet the different language, literacy and numeracy skills of your trainees
- help you to develop trainees' language, literacy and numeracy skills if they are unable to participate in training without those skills

What terms are used in the guide?

TCF	Textile, Clothing and Footwear
trainers	those who are delivering training
trainees	those who are being trained
teachers	those who teach language, literacy and/or numeracy in or for workplaces
on-the-job training	training on site and where the job is usually done
off-the-job training	training on site but away from the job, in an area put aside for training

Who contributed to the guide?

- workplace trainers from the TCF industry
- union representatives from the TCF industry
- workplace managers from the TCF industry
- private consultants training in the TCF industry
- language, literacy and numeracy teachers from government funded and private organisations

People from different sectors of the TCF industry were interviewed to gather real workplace examples to include in the guide.

Most of the examples come from workplace trainers. Some of them train full-time, whereas others are also supervisors, leading hands or experienced workers who train in between their other work. Some of the trainers have language, literacy and numeracy needs of their own.

What is in the guide?

The guide includes:

- easy to read practical information
- strategies which trainers and teachers have developed to identify and meet the language, literacy and numeracy needs of their trainees
- examples of real solutions to real issues that have come up in a variety of workplaces in the industry

Some of the strategies suggested are short-term solutions only. Others are more long-term.

How should the guide be used?

Check the front contents page for details on the different sections.

There are two main sections:

Section 1 Background information

Section 2 Strategies for trainers

Each of these sections is divided into parts which contain:

- information and/or strategies for trainers to use
- examples from trainers and others in the TCF industry

The Appendix has further information.

Use the contents page to find the section or part that you want.

Read and use the guide in a way that best suits your own needs.

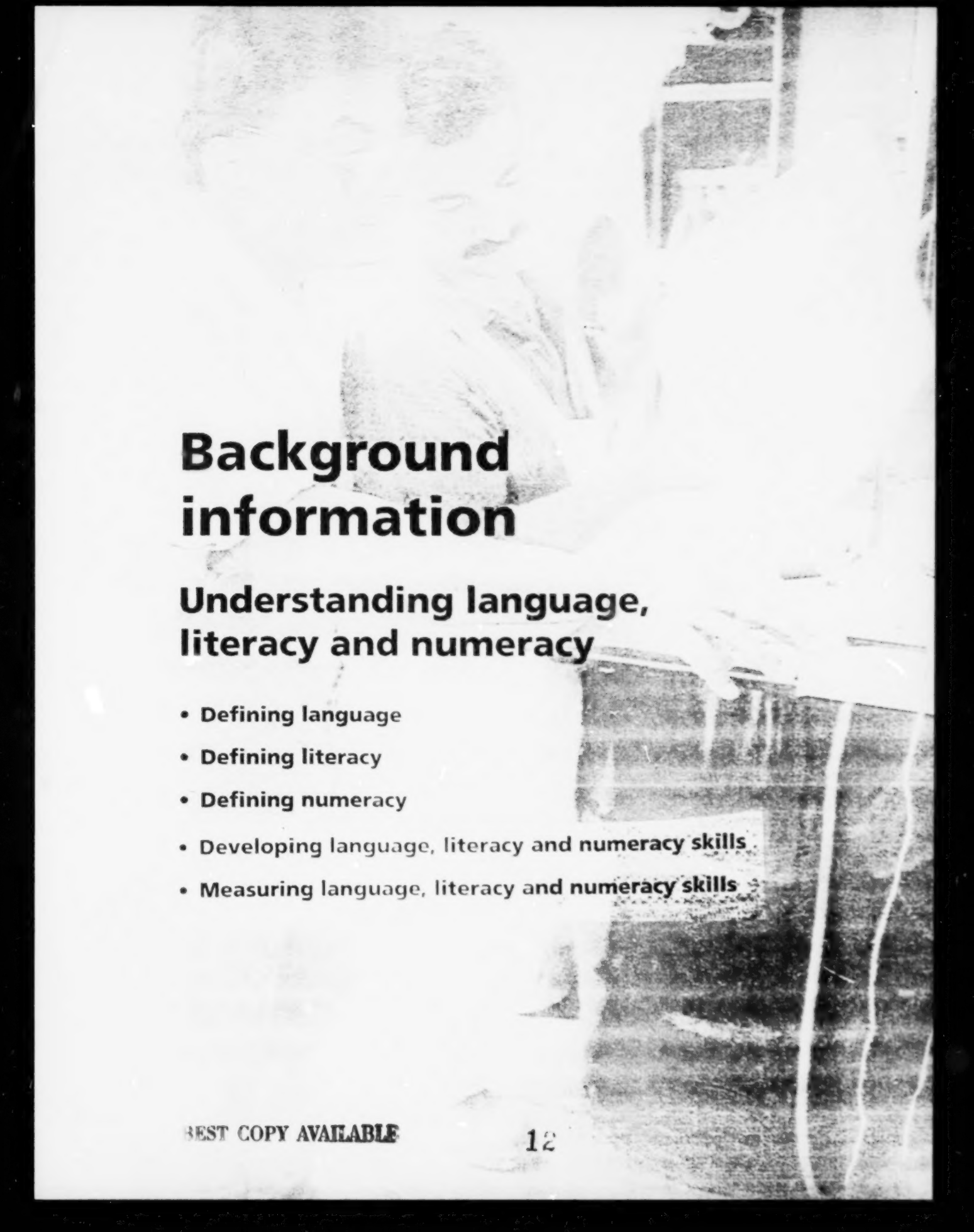
If you are fairly new to training, you may want to read the whole guide, one section at a time.

If you are an experienced trainer, you may choose to read only the parts which interest you.

Section

1

Background information



Background information

Understanding language, literacy and numeracy

- **Defining language**
- **Defining literacy**
- **Defining numeracy**
- **Developing language, literacy and numeracy skills**
- **Measuring language, literacy and numeracy skills**

Defining language

What do we mean by language?

Language is the main way in which people communicate with each other through the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Speaking doesn't just involve saying the words. It means knowing what to say in a particular situation.

So for example, if we go for an interview for a job, we use more polite language than we would use when talking to a workmate at work. And if we want to persuade someone to do something, we use different language than if we are ordering someone to do something.

Listening doesn't just involve understanding the words. It involves understanding the message and the attitude behind the words. It also involves being able to respond in a suitable way to what is heard.

So for example, if we hear a shout which is a warning of danger at work, it means understanding the importance of the message and knowing what to do as a result of hearing those spoken words.

Our language skills vary in different situations. This means that we can have good skills in one situation but poor skills in another.

For example we may find it easy to understand instructions in on-the-job training but difficult to understand explanations about the job in a training room. Or we may be very good at explaining details of our own job but not very good at describing details of what our company makes.

Defining literacy

What do we mean by literacy?

Literacy is about how people use written language, that is reading and writing.

Reading is more than just understanding written words on a page or a computer screen. It also involves being able to understand who wrote it and why, and being able to act on what is read.

So, for example, if we read a safety notice at work it means knowing that it is important information and knowing what to do as a result of reading the printed words.

Writing is more than just putting words into print. It also involves writing in a way that suits the situation so that the message is understood.

So for example, if we write a note to another workmate, we know to keep the message brief so that the person reading it can do so quickly and easily.

Literacy also involves numeracy. It includes recognising numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within written information.

Our literacy skills vary in different situations. This means that we can have good skills in one situation but poor skills in another.

For example, we may be able to read a job sheet but have difficulty reading a complicated training manual. Or we may find it easy to fill in production records but not so easy to write answers in a written test.

Defining numeracy

What do we mean by numeracy?

Numeracy is about how people use mathematics to make sense of the world - to help in dealing with real situations at work, at home and in the wider community.

It is not just about using numbers. It is about being able to use mathematical numbers, signs, symbols and information to:

- estimate
- understand shapes, size, direction and measurement
- solve problems

It is also about knowing when to use mathematics, what mathematics to use and how to judge if what is used is appropriate.

For example, if we have to work out our unit hours (how much of what we are making we can produce in an hour) we have to know how long we have been working, what we produced and what to do with those numbers.

Our numeracy skills vary in different situations. This means that we can have good skills in one situation but poor skills in another.

For example, we may find it easy to calculate our overtime pay but not so easy to work out the number of days owing to us for our holiday leave.

Developing language, literacy and numeracy skills

How do language, literacy and numeracy skills develop?

People develop language, literacy and numeracy skills as they grow up, often without being aware of it. They continue to develop these skills throughout their lives.

How these skills develop depends on:

- what education the person has had
- how much they want to learn
- what they think is worth learning

It is never too late to learn. If a person doesn't have particular language, literacy or numeracy skills, they just haven't learned them yet.

Language, literacy and numeracy skills do not stay the same. They change all the time depending on what the person needs to do.

Measuring language, literacy and numeracy skills

How can language, literacy and numeracy skills be measured?

Many tasks in the workplace require a combination of language, literacy and numeracy skills.

There is no single test which can be given to measure a person's language, literacy and numeracy skills. It is best to see what each person can do in each particular place and situation.

It is very rare that someone has no language, or is completely illiterate or completely innumerate. Most people have different amounts of language, literacy and numeracy, depending on the situation.

Language, literacy and numeracy skills needed for work are not easy to measure, partly because they keep changing depending on what skills the workplace considers necessary or important.

For example, a worker may once have been considered literate enough for their job if they could sign their name. Now it may be necessary for the same worker to be able to use computer technology to do their job.

As workplace situations change, many workers will need to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills to match the needs of their job.

Background information

Understanding training in the TCF industry

- Understanding changes to the industry
- Understanding changes to training

Understanding changes to the industry

Workplace change means that many workers are being required to learn new skills which they did not need before.

- In many workplaces, the traditional way of working alone on one process or with one piece of equipment is being replaced by teamwork. As team members, workers need more than basic communication skills to fully participate as members of their teams.
- Workers are often expected to learn the skills to use new technology such as computerised machines. This usually demands certain levels of language, literacy and numeracy.
- TQM (Total Quality Management) and QA (Quality Assurance) systems have put new demands on workers to understand and communicate more about details of their work. They often need to read and write information as well as discuss quality issues.
- With Just-In-Time systems, workplaces produce products to match immediate orders rather than stockpiling the goods. Workers have to be able to produce short runs of products at short notice. For this to be able to work well, workers need to be able to communicate quickly and efficiently.
- Companies, unions and workers in the TCF industry are often involved in enterprise bargaining. All need reasonable language, literacy and numeracy skills to discuss and negotiate an enterprise agreement for their workplace.

Understanding changes to training

As workers are being asked to improve their workplace skills, there is a need for more and better training. Many workplaces are introducing structured training, in which workers can increase their skills to earn better wages.

- Each sector of the industry has new skills classifications in which job descriptions are broader than they were in the past. This often means that workers are expected to have more skills within their skill levels than before.
- All three sectors of the TCF industry have a fairly high number of workers from non-English speaking backgrounds as well as many people from English speaking backgrounds with limited education. Many of these workers are able to do their jobs quite well but find it difficult to do training.
- Many workers in the industry have been out of formal education for a long time and may have had bad experiences in the education system. For these people training can be seen as very threatening, especially if their language, literacy and numeracy skills are poor.
- Trainers in the industry vary in how much training they do and how skilled they are at training. However because so much training in the industry is very practical, trainers are rarely trained to deal with the language, literacy and numeracy needs of their trainees.
- As the needs of industry change, trainers need new skills in delivering training. They may need to deliver training in very different ways. It is important that they are able to recognise the language, literacy and numeracy skills and needs of trainees and to take these into account when they train.

Background information

Identifying language, literacy and numeracy skills

- **Identifying skills needed for work**
- **Identifying skills needed for training**
- **Understanding on-the-job and off-the-job training**
- **Recognising problems**
- **Understanding problems**

In this section trainers, teachers and managers talk about their experiences and training strategies which they have developed.

Identifying skills needed for work

Different jobs need different skills.

In some jobs, workers are expected to have good language, literacy and numeracy skills.

Trainer - clothing

since we've introduced TQM (Total Quality Management) we expect all workers to contribute ideas in team meetings ... TQM is all about participation, so if they can't speak the language it's very difficult for them to contribute

Trainer - textiles

we have a number of people here with different amounts of literacy ... all except one can read and write enough for their job ... maybe they can't read and communicate as well as some other people, but as long as they can read job sheets and record information in their jobs that's all they need to do

For some jobs, the language, literacy and numeracy skills needed are very basic.

Trainer - clothing

I don't care if they don't speak good English but they must speak basic English ... and they've got to speak English to me because I don't know any other languages

Trainer - clothing

they have to be able to write down the work they've done each day - the style, cut number and colour ... then they put down how many bundles they've done ... it's not for me - it's so they can see how much work they've done ... I don't care what their spelling's like - it doesn't bother me in the least ... as long as they can work out what it means

For some jobs, some language, literacy and numeracy skills are never needed.

Teacher - textiles

there are many workers in this factory who are completely illiterate both in English and their first language ... they've been doing the same job for up to 26 years, maybe just brushing the material ... they know their job really well and they really don't need more skills than that for now

Trainer - textiles

one of the workers in the factory can't count from 1 to 10 in English ... but the point is that she doesn't have to ... she's very happy in her job and has been doing it for years

Workplace changes often mean changes to skills needed for the job.

As workers are expected to learn new skills, work in teams and take more responsibility for their work, the language, literacy and numeracy skills needed for their jobs often change as well.

Teacher - textiles

one of the shift leaders is very competent on a machine, but has new responsibilities in her job ... she's now expected to put information in writing whereas she only gave verbal messages before ... this is a problem because she only had 4 years of education ... so she can hardly write in her first language let alone English

Trainer - textiles

we're getting away from the system of using pen and paper and we're about to bring in a new computer system of product recording ... everyone who now does paperwork will have to use the computer instead ... because so many people are so scared of computers, we're going to introduce computer training ... we're thinking of having a computer training centre

Manager - footwear

since we introduced a new quality system into the factory, workers' jobs have changed ... before the new system, workers just reported problems to their supervisors ... now they're expected to write things down - things like function controls, batch details and defects ... for those who can't write, this has been a problem

Identifying skills needed for training

Different types of training need different skills.

In some training, workers are expected to have good language, literacy and numeracy skills.

Trainer - textiles

our induction course is about 8 hours and has a lot of safety awareness and so on ... we expect trainees to take a few notes as they watch videos and listen to the trainers ... they also have to read and understand a range of written information including fairly complex government policies in relation to Occupational Health and Safety

Manager - clothing

you can learn how to operate a spreading machine within a couple of weeks ... what does take a long time after that is how to recognise different fabrics ... all fabrics react differently in cutting and you have to know how to set your machine to compensate for the different ways in which they behave ... we expect our operators to know the names for all the fabrics in English

For some training, the language, literacy and numeracy skills needed are very basic.

Trainer - footwear

if a person can understand English when I'm training it's better for me because I can teach them the proper way, which is quick and saves material and time

Trainer - clothing

when they learn to use the Satelite (barcode machine), we give them a paper with simple instructions on how to use it ... we expect them to read that and if they can't, they need to get someone else to read it to them

Manager - clothing

when you're trained in bundling, you've got all your pieces and sizes as well as all your fits ... so in a cut, you might have half a dozen pieces, twenty or so sizes and fits from A to F ... and cuts can be up to 10,000 in a cut ... we expect everyone to be able to understand all of that

In some training, some language, literacy and numeracy skills are not needed at all.

Trainer - footwear

the people I train admit that they don't like to read or write ... I guess that's because they're not too good at it ... so I don't give them anything written down

Workplace changes often mean changes to training.

When jobs change, training is usually affected as well. To do the new training, workers may need language, literacy or numeracy skills that they did not need before.

Manager - footwear

in the past if a new person couldn't understand English we'd just put them in with a group where they could use their first language ... that worked quite well ... now that we've got them working in teams and we're running full training programs, they need to have better language skills

Understanding on-the-job and off-the-job training

On-the-job training

On-the-job training usually involves a lot of instruction and less explanation.

Many trainers tend to do a lot of pointing and not much talking when they train on the job because it is often too noisy to have a proper conversation. There is not much need to give names to processes, products and machines because everybody can see what is being done.

Most trainers concentrate on teaching practical skills while they train on the job and usually only ask trainees to read, write or do numeracy tasks if they are part of the job.

Trainees usually need less language, literacy and numeracy skills for on-the-job training than for off-the-job training.

Off-the-job training

Off-the-job training usually involves a lot of explanation and less instruction.

Off-the-job training tends to be in a quieter environment away from machinery and is rarely as rushed as on-the-job training. In off-the-job training there is more opportunity for the trainer and trainees to talk and practice is usually linked to theory and explanations.

If training is done off the job, in a training room or away from the factory floor, trainees often need more language to discuss what they cannot see. They need the language to refer to processes, products and machines as well as the language to discuss explanations or ideas.

In off-the-job training, trainees are more likely to be asked to read written information, write written answers to questions or take notes as they train.

Recognising problems

Some problems are obvious.

Trainees may tell you outright which language, literacy or numeracy skills they have or haven't got.

Trainer - textiles

we have a teacher on site and we let workers volunteer for classes called Brush Up Maths ... it's for people who need to do maths in their job who are concerned about how they're going with it and are having some problems ... it's hard for those who don't have problems to understand how awful that must be

You may be able to tell by yourself which language, literacy or numeracy skills your trainees have or haven't got. Expressions on people's faces usually let you know what's happening.

Trainer - footwear

I know that a lot of trainees are afraid that they might get into trouble for doing the wrong thing or if they don't understand, so they agree with me all the time ... when I ask them if they understand they always say they do ... but I know from their faces that they don't but don't want to admit it

Trainer - textiles

when you see that glazed look in their eyes, you know they haven't got a clue

Trainer - footwear

I knew she didn't always understand by the way she looked at me ... she didn't have any expression on her face at all

Often you can tell that there's a problem if the trainee can't do what they've been asked to do.

Trainer - footwear

when I start training, I try to pick up if the person understands what I'm talking about by asking them to explain back to me ... if they can't and I'm not getting through, I know that I've probably got someone with a language problem

Some problems are more difficult than others to pick up.

Many trainees have developed ways of coping with work without needing particular language, literacy and numeracy skills.

Trainer - clothing

one of my trainees of English speaking background has reading and writing problems that few people are aware of ... she's learned to fill in the forms necessary for her job but is only able to copy what others have done before her ... she can't do anything different to her normal routine

Sometimes trainees are very clever at hiding the evidence that their language, literacy and numeracy skills are missing. In such a case it may take you a while to find out what's really going on.

Trainer - textiles

we had an employee who filled in a written application form when he first applied for the job with us ... he had no apparent problems doing that ... it wasn't until weeks later when we put him into training that we found out that he couldn't read and write ... he'd originally got the person next to him to fill in the form for him

Understanding problems

Problems with language, literacy or numeracy skills may be the result of:

- interrupted education
- limited education
- bad experiences at school
- poor teachers
- a learning problem
- a physical problem
- worries at home or at work

If the trainee is of non-English speaking background, they may have:

- excellent communication skills in their first language
- different educational or cultural expectations
- no experience of training in English
- never had the opportunity to attend English classes

You don't have to know why your trainees have language, literacy or numeracy problems but you can do something about these problems.

Section

2

Strategies for trainers

Strategies for trainers

Preparing for your training

- Identifying skills needed for your training
- Identifying trainee language, literacy and numeracy skills
- Preparing trainees for your training
- Planning appropriate training
- Choosing appropriate training methods

In this section trainers and teachers talk about training strategies which they have developed.

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Identifying skills needed for your training

Think about what you want your trainees to be able to do.

What language skills will they need?

Will they need to: understand and follow instructions?
understand and use technical language?
understand explanations?
ask or answer questions?
give feedback on what they do or don't understand?
participate in training discussions?

What literacy skills will they need?

Will they need to: read and understand written instructions?
read and understand machine manuals?
read and understand written explanations?
read and understand diagrams?
write answers to questions?
write information or explanations?

What numeracy skills will they need?

Will they need to: understand and use mathematical language?
understand mathematical explanations?
do mathematical calculations?
estimate or measure space or distance?
use calculators?

Identifying trainee language, literacy and numeracy skills

Identify the language, literacy and numeracy skills that your trainees have so that you can pitch your training at the right level for them.

Watch your trainees at work or in training.

Watch how your trainees do what they have been asked to do. Compare what you expect them to do with what they can and can't do.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
when I'm training, I can see by what the trainees do when I've lost them ... I might start by giving them an example and then try another example, but stop half way and ask them what to do next ... often they don't make any comments at all or they're scribbling or they have no idea what I'm talking about	if that happens, I know that I'm expecting them to learn faster than they're able to

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
some trainees really struggle when I give them calculations to do ... just watching their faces, I can tell who's going to make it through with no worries and who I'm going to have to watch and help a bit more	I've learned not to expect the same results from every one I train



Talk with others in the workplace.

You could talk to those who have interviewed your trainees or those who supervise them. Use their knowledge of your trainees to help you to identify their skills and needs.

Teacher - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
supervisors told me that when some of the operators wrote their end of shift reports, the information in them was hard to understand ... the sentence structure was really hard to follow or they'd written far too much	that gave me valuable information on which I could base my teaching

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
sometimes we ask our teams to write down their suggestions on improving production ... one person will usually write down the ideas for the whole team	that often indicates that the others are not as confident with their writing skills

Talk with other trainers.

Other trainers may be able to help you if they have done similar training with similar kinds of trainees. Find out what has worked for them and what has been a problem. Learn from their experiences as well as from your own.

Decide what to do to help those with problems.

Think about these questions:

- Who will need help?
- What do you think they will need help with?
- When will they need the help?

Preparing trainees for your training

Prepare trainees for your training so that they know what to expect and what is expected of them. They can then prepare for the language, literacy and numeracy that they will have to do.

Make sure that it's quite clear what your trainees will have to do.

Explain what will happen during and after your training and give trainees the opportunity to ask questions if they don't understand.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
we need to be sure that the girls who don't speak much English understand what they'll have to do while they train	when I start training a new girl, I explain to her that she has to time herself when she does an exercise and she has to write down how long it's taken her ... I show her an example and check that she's understood what to do

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
trainees like to know what it is they're expected to do	we keep a copy of training information for each section at each of the operating areas so that workers can read what the objectives of the training for their section are

Explain any new language, literacy or numeracy skills that will be needed for training.

This is important in preparing trainees for what they will have to do.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
the workers often don't understand why they're being asked to record more production details on paper	it helps when I explain what they have to do and why they have to do it ... with the new productivity based payment system, they understand it because they'll get more money out of it

Find out if your trainees are concerned about their language, literacy and numeracy skills.

If trainees are worried, make sure that they have an opportunity to express their concerns, in private if necessary. Keep these concerns in mind when planning and delivering your training.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	→	SOLUTION
some guys volunteered for maths or literacy training and others in their section gave them a hard time because of it		we ran some awareness sessions for supervisors - some weren't aware that not everybody finds literacy and numeracy easy ... that helped a lot

Planning appropriate training

Plan appropriate training so that your trainees can learn quickly and easily with training which is suited to them. Appropriate training means that none of the trainees needs to be frustrated or bored when you train.

Be realistic in what you plan to do.

Keep your trainees' skills in mind as you train but be flexible in how you do it. Be prepared to change or even stop training if the trainees become anxious.

Don't assume that all trainees can understand your training.

You can't assume that all trainees have the language, literacy and numeracy necessary for your training unless the skills have been checked before training begins. To be safe, it is best to use clear, plain English.

Choose training activities to match trainees' skills.

If trainees have limited language skills, take this into consideration when you plan their training.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
many of the workers here are from non-English speaking backgrounds, so I need to make a point of using uncomplicated language when I train	I do use a fair bit of technical language, but this is necessary for the job ... I teach it right in the beginning of the induction program ... at times I even oversimplify my training just to make sure that I get my message across to everybody

Some of your trainees may be able to read in another language but not in English. Others may not be able to read in any language at all. If most of your trainees can't read, you may choose to train without any written material at all.

Find out what trainees already know and build on that.

Use what your trainees already know and can do as a starting point. Introduce new material gradually using plenty of examples.

Link any new training with training that has been done before.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I like to build on what the trainees already know	I start training by explaining why we're doing it ...that includes explaining how the new training links in with any previous training that they've done ... when they changed one of the procedures in the company, for example, and I did some training to teach the trainees about the changes, I knew that the trainees already knew the terminology because it had been taught in the induction program

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
when I train someone on a different machine from one they already know how to use, I don't need to waste time starting from the beginning again	I can build on language skills that the trainees have learned from training on other machines in the factory in the past

If trainees can write in another language but not in English, let them write in their first language if it's easier for them.

Teacher - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
it makes sense to use literacy skills that workers already have in other languages	I was teaching workers of non-English speaking background the English names for the various pieces of clothing they sorted as part of their job ... they had to match 10 simple pictures with the English words for those pictures ... the English words were written in a list on the paper ... once the workers matched the English words with the pictures, many of them wrote the words in their own language alongside the English words

Trial your presentation with different people.

Use people who know the workplace but not necessarily the job, and see if they can easily understand your instructions and explanations.

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I'm not always sure if I've pitched the training at exactly the right level	if I think there may be some possible confusion with the training, I'll do a dry run ... I'll either stand up and give a presentation to the other trainer or we bring in someone else - maybe the production manager, a shift leader or an operator and present it to them ... that also gives me some feedback about what sort of questions are likely to be asked

Use Plain English for any written training information.

"Plain English" is the term used for writing training material which is suitable for those who read it. It does not, however, just mean simple English. It may need to include technical language from the workplace but this language needs to be explained to trainees if they don't already know it.

If you do choose to use written training material, keep the language simple and use pictures and diagrams, if these make it clearer, to illustrate information.

If you are writing training materials, keep the following points in mind for trainees with limited reading skills:

- Include page numbers on handouts, as these are often easier to find than a word or heading
- Use titles and headings to give trainees clues about what to expect in the information that follows
- Highlight the key points (by using darker writing, for example) to make the important points stand out
- Write in point form if possible.
- Use lots of white space on the page
- Use pictures, photos or diagrams to explain the writing

i For further information on writing in plain English, look in the back section of this guide.

Use others to help check any written training information.

Use others to check the difficulty of your material and the accuracy of the spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Choosing appropriate training methods

Different training methods suit trainees with different language, literacy or numeracy needs. First identify your trainees' needs and then choose the most appropriate methods to use with them.

Use visual material to illustrate your training.

Real workplace materials, pictures and photos can be used to encourage discussion and improve language skills.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
if I'm training off the job, it's hard to get the point across without the appropriate samples to look at	I use whatever training aids are necessary to get the point across ... if we're talking about fabric faults, I like to have real-life examples to look at ... if I don't have those samples, the trainees need more language skills to describe and discuss the fault ... occasionally, the samples needed are too big to bring to the training room, so I use slides or overhead transparencies

Teacher - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
most of the workers in this company have only ever been trained in their first language, which is not English ... when I'm teaching off-the-job and the workers I'm teaching don't even have basic English, I need pictures of the workplace for them to look at	I've taken photos of everyone doing their jobs and of the various machines they work on ... I've also taken a series of photos of a machine that they all have to learn to use - these show the separate steps in using it ... by talking about the photos I can build up their language skills in describing what they do

Use audio visual equipment to reinforce your training.

Use equipment such as videos, slides or audio tapes to give your trainees a variety of things to look at and listen to. This will make a change from written information or spoken instructions and explanations.

If you do use audio visual equipment, explain why you are using it. Tell your

trainees to watch for certain points during a video and ask them questions at the end to see how much they understood.

i For further information on training videos, look in the back section of this guide.

Use written information as a support for trainees.

Use whiteboards, charts, manuals and handouts if your trainees have reasonable reading skills. Give trainees copies of manuals and handouts to take away if they want to read over any of the information.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
when I train a group in using new calculations they need for their jobs, I like to work through a few examples with the whole group	we work through the examples together on the whiteboard in the training room ... I also give them a few worked examples to take away

Educational books can be very useful. Some have been written especially to help with basic language, literacy and numeracy skills needed by adult learners in the workplace.

Teacher - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I don't have time to write lots of new training material on basic numeracy skills for my classes	I use all sorts of books to teach numeracy skills ... I use some of the worksheets from these books and then make up relevant examples from the workplace to extend the basic skills I've taught

i For further information on books to help with language, literacy and numeracy skills for adults in industry, look in the back section of this guide.

Use practical methods for trainees with limited skills.

Trainees with limited language, literacy or numeracy skills usually relate well to practical training, that is learning through doing practical tasks.

Teacher - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
a lot of workers had maths problems all through their school days and they need to go right back to basic concepts before they can understand all the maths they need for work	when workers needed to go over the basic understanding of fractions I used circles and oranges to explain how fractions worked ... we pretended that the circles were pizzas and divided them up ... when we cut up the oranges the guys would say, "Wow, why didn't anyone teach me like that before? This is so much easier to understand!"

Games can be useful in teaching new skills.

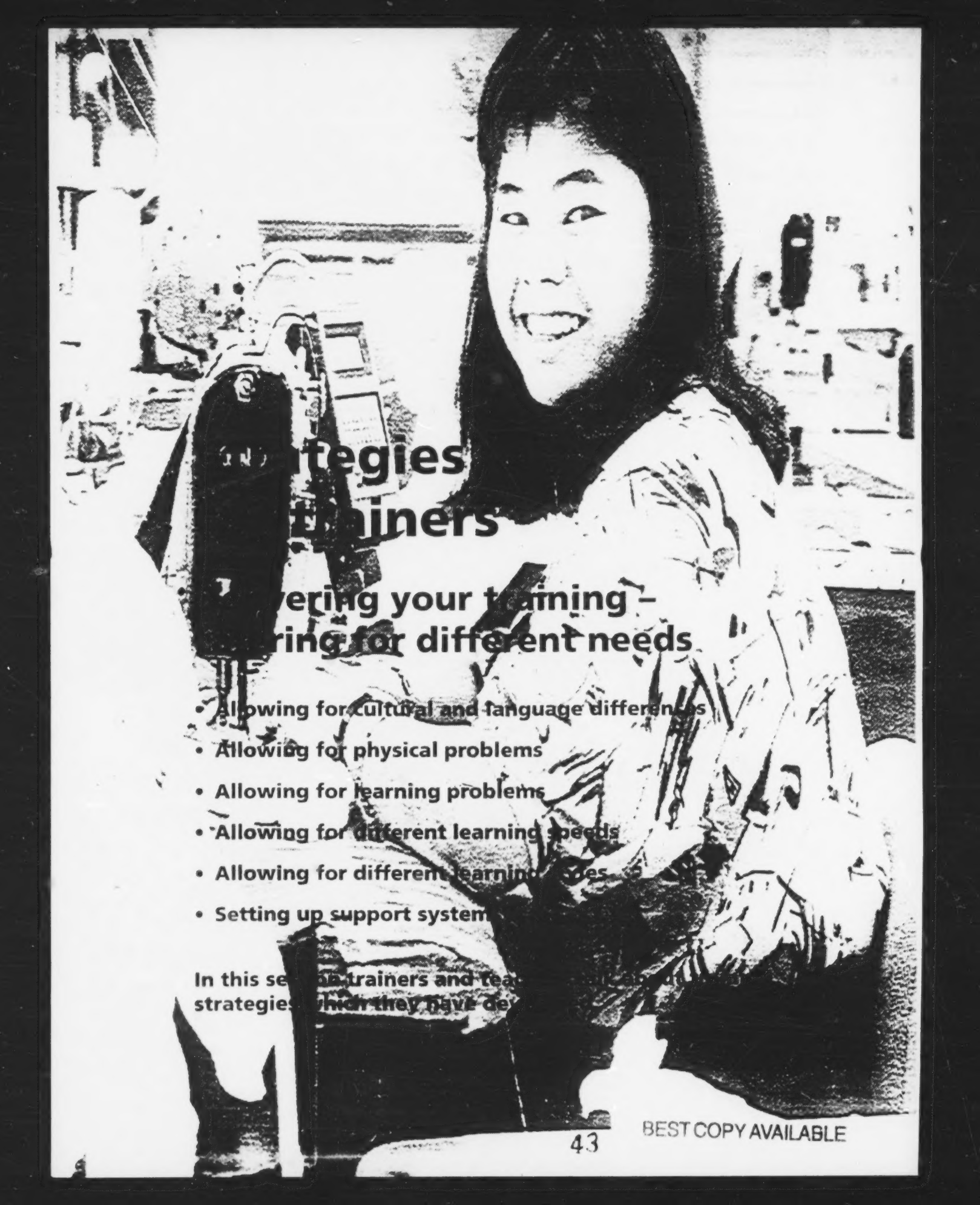
Some workplace teachers use educational games to teach language, literacy and numeracy skills. A game can be a light-hearted way of teaching skills that may otherwise seem boring or difficult.

Teacher - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
a lot of workers in my classes need to read job sheets ... some of them can't even read and write in their first language, so I need to go very slowly ... I don't want to make the classes too difficult for them	I use a range of games when I teach these workers basic literacy skills ... we play bingo with words they are learning to read instead of with numbers and I make up alphabet grids in which they have to find the same words ... they like all the games because they're more fun than writing

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
many of the guys have problems with the spelling of words they need to write in their end of shift reports	I make up a crossword puzzle with the words they often need to write ... the answers are given in a list on the page so the trainees can look at the list to get the right spelling ... I got the idea from watching how our workplace teacher used games to teach literacy



(IN) Strategies Trainers

Covering your training – allowing for different needs

- Allowing for cultural and language differences
- Allowing for physical problems
- Allowing for learning problems
- Allowing for different learning speeds
- Allowing for different learning styles
- Setting up support systems

In this section trainers and teachers talk about the strategies which they have developed

Allowing for cultural and language differences

Try to avoid any cultural misunderstandings as you train by allowing for cultural and language differences.

Find out about your trainees' cultural and language backgrounds.

The expectations of trainees may be influenced by their cultural and language backgrounds. This may affect the way the trainees communicate with you as you train.

Trainees from other cultures may:

- think that interrupting during training is impolite
- think that by asking for more help, they are questioning the trainer's ability to instruct
- be afraid of losing face (looking foolish) by showing that they don't understand

Make it quite clear what you expect when you train.

If you tell your trainees what you expect, there are less likely to be misunderstandings.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
often trainees with limited English say nothing as I train and I don't know whether they've understood or not	I tell them that I expect them to let me know if they don't understand and I encourage them to ask questions

Find out what trainees expect during training.

Trainees may have different expectations from you about what they are expected to do in training.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I had a trainee from a non-English speaking background who hardly spoke at all when he was first trained ... he said that he understood all the training, yet he clearly didn't because his work wasn't up to standard ... he also never spoke up if he made a mistake, so a lot of leather was wasted during the training period	I realised that this person came from a culture where it was considered rude to interrupt the training ... he was also afraid of losing face by admitting that he hadn't understood ... I encouraged him to speak up more and explained that it was OK to tell me if he didn't understand

Discuss the differences between your trainees' countries of origin and Australia if necessary.

It may help to discuss cultural expectations of training to avoid misunderstandings.

Teacher - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I felt uncomfortable when one of the workers from a non-English speaking background in my class kept calling me Madam even though I'd asked to be called by my first name	when I brought up the subject in class, the worker explained that it was a sign of respect in his culture and that he felt uncomfortable being less formal with a teacher ... it took him a while to relax enough to be comfortable using my first name

Allowing for physical problems

Trainees may be disadvantaged if they have physical problems which are not acknowledged during training. These problems may affect their language, literacy or numeracy skills.

Find out whether any of your trainees have physical problems.

Physical problems may make it difficult for some trainees to do training as easily as others. If they do have problems, you may then need to adapt your training to accommodate the problems.

If they have hearing problems for example, they may need to stand closer than normal while you train. If they have a nervous stutter, you may need to give them plenty of warning before asking them to speak in front of a large group. Or you may choose not to put them into that situation at all.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I have a worker who is profoundly deaf who I've needed to train ... she can lipread and speak a bit	when we communicate, there is always a lot of body language and pointing ... I don't expect a lot of questions or comments as I train ... if we have problems communicating, we often write questions or comments down

Allowing for learning problems

Try to be aware of any learning problems your trainees may have. These learning problems may affect how they are able to learn as well as the speed at which they learn.

Find out whether any of your trainees have learning problems.

Learning problems cause some trainees to experience a lot of frustration when being trained in the language, literacy or numeracy skills needed for their jobs. It helps if you know how these trainees deal with their limited ability to learn.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I have a trainee who is very slow to learn and has terrible problems with writing and numeracy ... it would be disastrous for her to focus on what she can't do because there's not a lot she can do	I've learned to focus on what she can do and I praise her a lot more than I would someone else ... she loves to be told when she's done a job well

Don't dwell on trainee language, literacy or numeracy needs.

You don't want trainees to worry about the skills that they don't have. For some trainees, admitting to language, literacy or numeracy needs can be very embarrassing.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I was training a girl of English speaking background when I noticed that she wasn't listening because she was getting anxious about all the paperwork ... I'd given her all this information but she could hardly read or write	when I pointed out to her that I could train her without the paperwork, she was quite relieved ... there was no point throwing a lot of papers at her if she couldn't use them

ISSUE

I usually hold my literacy class in a training room but sometimes the managers have meetings in there and I have to use the canteen ... the first time I had to use the canteen, some people were in there having lunch ... the group didn't want to be seen in there by others, particularly if the others could see and hear what they were working on ... they were embarrassed to be seen learning such basic skills

SOLUTION

I chose to stop the class rather than embarrass the group ... it was important for those people not to be teased about such a sensitive issue

Allowing for different learning speeds

Trainees with good language, literacy and numeracy skills can move faster through training. On the other hand other trainees with low language, literacy or numeracy skills often need more time to practise their skills, ask for help and really understand the training.

Don't expect everyone to learn at the same speed.

Training can be quite stressful for those who can't keep up because the work is too difficult. For those who are bored the training may be too easy.

For some trainees, learning new skills can be a difficult task. If they have language, literacy and numeracy needs it can be much more difficult.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I need to allow extra time for training people who have language or literacy problems	it depends a lot on how well the person can communicate and whether they can read and write ... sometimes I have to allow about double the normal time

Group training can be quite a challenge if you have trainees who learn at very different speeds from one another. You can overcome these problems by encouraging trainees with good skills to help the others

Adjust the speed of your training to your trainees' needs.

Watch for signs that your trainees are getting either frustrated, confused or bored. If necessary, speed up or slow down or have a short break.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I often have to explain mathematical concepts ... sometimes I notice that some trainees look like they're talking to themselves, thinking: "How did she do that?"	when they look confused I need to go back over what I just explained, but go more slowly

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I watch out for signs that the trainees have had enough - like when they get tired or frustrated	if they get tired, it's often because they don't have the language to follow ... I either stop for a while or slow down ... if they get frustrated, I simplify the training or go back to basics

Allow enough time for trainees to digest what has been taught.

Many trainees need plenty of time to understand new ideas.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I've noticed that some trainees take longer to understand new concepts than others, particularly when the concept involves numeracy	I adjust the speed of the training according to how the trainees are going, and allow a little extra time for those who don't understand straight away

Allow enough time for trainees to answer questions.

Some trainees need extra time to work out what you are asking. This is often the case with trainees of non-English speaking background who may need to first understand the question and then translate in their head before answering.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
people from English speaking backgrounds tend to speak up in group training more than those from non-English speaking backgrounds	I've found that if I give those from non-English speaking backgrounds more time or more encouragement to talk, they're better at communicating in the group

Allow time for skills to be practised as well as learned.

Some trainees need more time than others to practise new language, literacy and numeracy skills to reinforce what they have learned.

ISSUE

some trainees need extra time to digest and apply what they have learned, particularly if they have to read or write new information as a result of the training ... many of them actually know what to do, but want to be able to check that they are not making mistakes

SOLUTION

I make sure that I stay near the machines for a short while after the training to answer any questions that trainees might have

Allowing for different learning styles

Different trainees prefer to learn in different ways. Some prefer to get stuck right into the training whereas others like to have everything explained to them first.

The way in which trainees react to your training will often give you clues as to what they like. Use different methods if you want to allow for different learning styles. Trainees who lack certain skills may be disadvantaged if you only train in one way.

Use different group sizes.

Trainees and trainers often like to train in different group sizes according to their own learning styles.

Some prefer to train alone, moving along at their own pace.

Sewing machine operations trainer - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
if I train a group, it's difficult to pick up what each person has understood	I prefer to train one on one ... if there's a language, literacy or numeracy problem, I can deal with it more easily and quickly than with a group

Others prefer group learning, where ideas can be shared and discussed.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
If I train one on one we don't get a lot of interaction ... these guys have to learn to work together in a team so it's better if they train together	I prefer to train in small groups rather than one to one ... when the guys are trained together, it creates a friendly atmosphere in which everyone has an opportunity to practise their language ... you have to be careful with a bigger group though - it's easier for a trainee to sit back and not participate in discussions

Use different places.

Some trainees like to train in a formal environment like a training room, and others prefer the practical side of training on the job.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
it's not always appropriate to train only on the line	I like to train both off the job and on the job ... when I have training room sessions, I can give out written notes and the trainees can concentrate on the theory of what they're learning ... when I move to the floor, they can put those theories into practice

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
we used to train on the job, but it meant that we were wasting machine time and production went down	now we train in a training room which means that everyone is less worried about losing production time ... it gives the trainees the opportunity to practise away from the pressures of the floor



Many trainees like to practise new language, literacy or numeracy skills at home.

Teacher - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I only have very limited time in which to train a number of people in language and literacy skills so I need them to practise at home as well as with me	I've made tapes for each person with the pronunciation of words they need to pronounce in their jobs ... they can take these tapes home to practise their pronunciation in private

Teacher - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
the workers I'm teaching need to learn to write notes to others in the factory ... I can't ask them to keep practising at work because they need to get on with production ... if they want to improve their literacy skills they need to practise at home	I've given the workers their own copies of a workbook which has been written for distance learning students ... they work through the exercises in the book at home, listening to an audio tape which explains what they have to do ... they bring the exercises back to me to check

Setting up support systems

Use the skills of others to help your trainees. There are often many people, both in and outside the workplace, who have the skills to help your trainees with language, literacy or numeracy problems.

Some trainees like to train with other people from the workplace. Such people often feel more comfortable being trained by another worker.

Use the language, literacy and numeracy skills of others in the workplace.

Other workers in your workplace often have language, literacy or numeracy skills that can be used to help your training.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I have a worker who is profoundly deaf who I've needed to train	I sometimes use a mechanic from another department who has deaf parents and he interprets for me in sign language

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
not everyone understands explanations the first time they are explained	when I'm teaching the guys how to do calculations, I use other people in the group where possible ... I get one who has understood the calculations to explain to someone who hasn't ... firstly it gets the two guys communicating with each other and secondly I can see how well the first one has understood ... the one explaining feels good because he's able to teach someone else

If trainees have very few language skills, consider using someone in the company to interpret for you.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
many of the people I train are from non-English speaking backgrounds and have limited English language skills	I speak four languages other than English so when I train, I often use the trainee's first language ... it's important for production that they can learn the job as quickly as possible ... when I go over the training, I gradually introduce English words

Trainer - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
most of my trainees are of non-English speaking backgrounds, but I can't understand or speak any other languages apart from English	I use other workers to interpret what I'm saying when I train new workers with poor English



Using an interpreter is **not** always a good solution.

You may find that

- people from the same country may speak different languages
- people from the same country may speak with different accents
- you can't check how well your information is being interpreted unless you speak the language yourself

Teacher - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
you can't guarantee that any interpreter you choose will be the right one	I used a worker in the factory to write the Chinese translation next to drawings of workplace vocabulary that workers were learning ... afterwards I found out that the Chinese workers were from mainland China but the woman translating was from Taiwan, and they couldn't understand her translations

There can be problems with using an interpreter if the interpreter's skills are limited. This can be quite serious if workers need to understand the exact legal meaning of what has been interpreted.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
Mandarin is my fourth language, so when I train in Mandarin I don't always know the words straight away	I have to use very basic language to train in that language, so I can't explain as many details as I can in other languages

Manager - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
we gave our workers the textiles skills classifications and asked them to tell us from that information what skills they had ... because the skills classifications had been translated into nine other languages as well as English, we assumed that they would be able to understand them	what we found was that many of the workers were illiterate in their first language and others couldn't really understand the information even if someone read it to them ... what they told us about their skills might be quite inaccurate

Use the skills of others outside the workplace.

Encourage trainees to take away written notes to other friends or family members for explanation if necessary. However, these others do not always know as much about your workplace as those who work in it.

ISSUE	SOLUTION
not all trainees understand all the details of the written training notes we give them	we give them pages of written definitions of workplace terminology when they first start with the company ... they can take them away to read over and to check the meanings

If your trainees have major problems with language, literacy or numeracy, you may need to consider getting expert help to teach these skills.

Government subsidies may be available to bring a language, literacy or numeracy teacher into your workplace.

- i** For further information on government subsidies for language, literacy and numeracy programs, look at the back section of this guide.


$$F I = \frac{(3M \times 16) + (F \times 15)}{(16 \times M \text{ per } 100)}$$

Strategies for trainers

**Delivering your training –
developing language, literacy
and numeracy skills**

- Understanding workplace terms
- Asking and answering questions
- Giving feedback
- Understanding your instructions
- Understanding your explanations

In this section trainers and teachers talk about training strategies which they have developed.

Understanding and using workplace terms

Trainees need to understand and use workplace terms to fully participate in workplace training.

Explain any important technical terms before using them in training.

Make sure that trainees understand important or new vocabulary and write it down if necessary for trainees to refer to during the training session.

Trainer - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
most new workers don't know the names of what they're bundling when they start working for us	when I start training, I teach them the names of the pieces and the fabrics

Use everyday English to explain meanings of technical language.

Try to use words that trainees already know and avoid unnecessary, irrelevant details.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
when I first put workers through the induction program I teach them the names or terminology they will need to use when working	before I do that I check that it's a term used by everybody in the factory ... I use simple, everyday language to explain what it means



Encourage trainees to check meanings if they don't understand.

If trainees are reading written notes or manuals, encourage them to highlight or underline difficult words as they read.

Teacher - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
many of the workers I work with don't know all the expressions for workplace terms and can't always pronounce the words they do know	I get them to highlight words they either don't know or can't pronounce ... then we can go over them one at a time

Use diagrams, drawings, photos or real objects to help explain meanings.

Trainees with language, literacy or numeracy problems sometimes find it much easier to understand by looking at visual material rather than by reading definitions or by listening to explanations. However if you are using diagrams and drawings make sure that they do make the information clearer. Some visual materials are difficult to understand and may confuse people rather than help.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I was training one of the Asian guys who couldn't speak a word of English ... I gave him all this paperwork as well but he didn't know what to do with it	I used a diagram to explain the lines of stretch in the leather ... he got the idea and picked up the English words bit by bit ... the picture made it much easier to explain

Teacher - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
workers of non-English speaking background were having trouble discussing names of parts of shoes without the shoes there in front of them	I used photos from a company catalogue to discuss the parts of shoes which they were learning to describe ... with the pictures from the catalogue, it was then much easier to connect what they were seeing with a written description

Use others to explain meanings to those with limited English.

If necessary, use other workers to interpret but make sure that they are accurate with their interpretation.

Make a glossary of technical words and their meanings.

If you use a dictionary to explain meanings, make sure that the dictionary definition is not too difficult to understand. Use pictures if necessary.

If your trainees are from non-English speaking backgrounds and their English is very limited, you may want to include definitions in other languages as well.

Teacher - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
a few workers of non-English speaking background were having trouble remembering the technical language for defects in the shoes	with the trainer, I made a glossary which included the technical words for defects, the causes of the defects and what was needed to fix them ... trainees were able to have their own copies of the glossary

Help trainees to remember and use any new words they learn.

If trainees keep a record of new words they are more likely to remember and use them.

Teacher - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
workers had problems remembering how to spell words they needed to write in their end of shift reports	each week they'd bring 5 or 6 words to class and I'd write them up on the whiteboard ... the list grew week by week ... to remember them for their reports, a lot of them wrote them down in little notebooks which they kept in their overalls

Go over any new vocabulary during your training session and at the end. This will help trainees to remember and use the language.

Asking and answering questions

Check that trainees have at least basic language skills.

If trainees don't have basic language skills, misunderstandings can easily happen.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
we sometimes have misunderstandings because some of our workers with poor language skills can't clearly express their ideas ... a Vietnamese worker came up to one of the Australian workers and asked for another piece of leather the same as she had in her hand ... this happened about four times and the Australian was getting quite frustrated with the continual request	we had to call in another Vietnamese worker to interpret ... what was wanted was the piece for the opposite foot rather than the same foot, but the Vietnamese didn't know how to ask for it in English

If trainees ask and answer questions during training, you can find out how well your training has been understood. If it hasn't been understood, it's important to find out why not.

Don't assume that trainees understand just because they don't ask questions.

Many trainees, especially from non-English speaking backgrounds, are embarrassed to admit that they don't understand.

Trainer - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I find it really annoying when I'm training somebody and they say that they understand when they don't ... what makes me more frustrated is when one of the other workers later comes up to me and asks "What did you say to X ? She really didn't understand one word that you were saying "	I've learned to check what's been understood ... and I encourage my girls to let me know when they don't understand

It is important to encourage trainees to ask for more explanation if they don't understand.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
as workers learn to cut leather they have to calculate how many pairs of shoes they'll get out of the hide they have ... if they don't get enough pairs they know that there's something wrong	I encourage them to ask me or others in their team for help

Use trainees' questions to guide your training.

When trainees do ask questions you can tell how much has been understood.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I need to know how much of my training my trainees understand ... if they ask questions, it's a way of checking that they're listening to me	I prefer it when they ask questions because it gives me an idea of what they've understood ... I ask them to stop me at any point if anything I say doesn't make sense or if they don't know what I mean

Keep your own questions clear and simple.

Make sure that trainees clearly understand what you are asking.

Think about what information you want to know and then decide what type of questions will give you that information.

If you want a detailed answer, ask an open question like "What will you do first?" or "When do you give it to the next person?"

Open questions usually begin with Who, What, When or Why. They ask for information, an idea or an opinion.

If you want a short answer, ask a closed question like "Have you done it properly?" or "Is that OK?"

Closed questions only require short answers - often just yes or no - and are used to get specific information.

People will sometimes say what they think you want to hear. Avoid asking questions which lead them to do this.

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I know that my trainees are often afraid that they might get into trouble for doing the wrong thing or if they don't understand so they agree with me all the time ... when I ask them , "Do you understand?" they say, "Yes, I do " but I know that they don't	I've learned to ask them open questions like "What do you do next?" to find out what they have understood

Encourage trainees to answer your questions.

Give trainees with limited English plenty of encouragement when they make an effort to use English.

Giving feedback

Ask trainees to give you feedback on your training so that you know how much they have understood. This is especially important if you want to make sure that you meet their language, literacy or numeracy needs.

Ask trainees for feedback.

As you train, ask your trainees to point out unclear explanations or instructions. Ask them to let you know things which don't make sense to them.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I had a trainee from a non-English speaking background who hardly spoke at all when he was first trained ... He said that he understood all the training, yet clearly didn't because his work wasn't up to standard ... I repeated my instructions but it didn't make much difference	I asked him to repeat my instructions in his own words ... his grammar was pretty awful but at least he was letting me know what he understood

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
some people get confused with left feet and right feet ... it's like a jigsaw puzzle ... if you put the wrong piece in the wrong place, it won't fit ... some people do it anyway because they don't realise that they're making a mistake	I ask them to tell me when they get confused ... because I'm checking on their work, I can point out where they went wrong

Use what you find out from feedback to make your training more suitable.

Feedback from your trainees can give you ideas on how your training needs to change.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
as I was training a couple of workers with limited English, I noticed that they really weren't understanding what I was telling them	I realised that I had to keep the talking to a minimum and show them a lot more as I trained ... it was only by trying out my normal method of talking a lot that I saw that it wasn't appropriate for these trainees

When you ask your trainees to repeat your instructions back to you, you can check how much they have understood.

Trainer - footwear

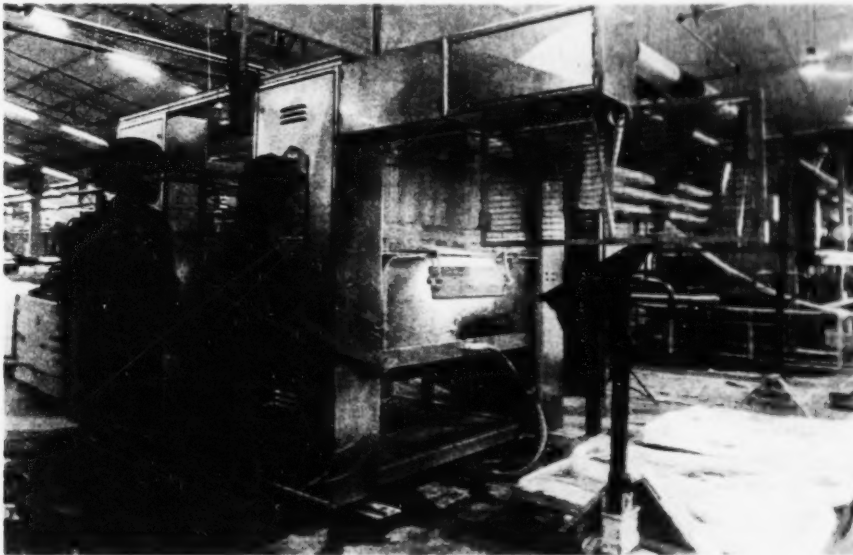
ISSUE	SOLUTION
when I start training, I try to pick up if the person understands what I'm talking about by asking them to explain things back to me ... if they can't , I know that I've probably got someone with a language problem	I usually slow down and use more demonstration as I talk

Understanding your instructions

Your training is more likely to be successful when your instructions are easily understood.

Demonstrate tasks and activities as you train.

Point and use body language to add meaning as you speak. By explaining what you're doing while you are showing the trainees how to do it, you are actually giving them the language for their job.



Trainer - clothing

ISSUE

my two Turkish girls found it very hard at first ... they couldn't understand my English because they'd only been in Australia for a short while

SOLUTION

I taught them by showing and explaining different shapes ... I could've stood there and just talked, but it worked better to show them ... that way they understood more ... as time went on, they could understand more of what I was saying as well

Use pictures, illustrations or photos if necessary.

Pictures can be useful to explain separate steps of instructions if they are clear and show trainees what has to be done. Be careful that the pictures don't confuse trainees.

Trainer - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
sometimes I ask them to stitch on the black line ... but some people misunderstand and stitch off the black line	when they do that, I feel that they haven't understood what I told them so I go back and repeat the instructions ... they might not understand the words but I show them again ... I grab a pen and draw on the card where they have to stitch ... then they understand

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
workers in the finishing section have to read and follow measurement charts for every style of garment made in the factory ... this means about 150 different styles	each chart has a drawing of the garment which shows the measurements which need to be taken ... because the drawings are simple and clear, it's easy to teach the girls what to do

Keep your language simple, straightforward and to the point.

Explain what you are doing as you give instructions. Keep your actions simple and straightforward. Show trainees what to do rather than what not to do.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
if I give trainees the language as I instruct it's easier for them to follow when I ask them to copy me ... if I show them what not to do they get mixed up and copy the wrong way	I prefer to tell them what I'm doing and to show them the correct way only

Give instructions in the correct order and try not to jump from one idea to another.

Give instructions in the same order as you want trainees to do the task. This is particularly important for trainees with limited English.

Trainer - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I often explain what to do and then add a comment at the end about something which needs to be done in the middle of the task ... that confuses them because their English is so limited	as much as possible, I try to remember to explain everything in the right order

Speak clearly and slowly.

There is less chance of trainees misunderstanding you if you make an effort to speak clearly and slowly.

Trainer - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
we've got a lot of workers of non-English speaking backgrounds and they don't always understand English instructions easily	I make a point of speaking slowly and clearly when I train ... a lot of my girls say they understand me most of the time because I speak slowly and show them what to do at the same time

Use complete sentences rather than 'pidgin' English.

If you speak 'pidgin' English and leave words out, your language will not necessarily be easier for trainees of non-English speaking backgrounds to understand. By speaking in 'pidgin' English, you are actually giving your trainees a poor model of English to follow.

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
sometimes it's very tempting for me to speak to trainees almost in baby talk - "This one no good - this one not bad" ... I feel like it's the only way I can get through to them	I've realised that when I do use baby talk, they just copy and don't improve their English ... if I teach them the correct expression, they can use it later with someone else

Understanding your explanations

Explanations can get very complicated and trainees may need good language, literacy and numeracy skills to understand them.

Adjust your language to suit your trainees.

Try not to use slang expressions or complicated language that might not be understood by all trainees.

Keep explanations simple and straightforward, particularly if there are a lot of trainees with limited English in your workplace.

Trainer - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
When I train the workers in TQM (Total Quality Management) it's important that they understand the concept of what we're talking about ... it's not just the words, it's the meaning behind them	I simplify the language and use someone from within the company to interpret if necessary

Make sure that trainees have the language to give you feedback on your explanations.

Trainees need the language to give you feedback about what is not clear in your explanations. If they don't know the language which you use in your explanations, then introduce it before or as you train.

Teacher - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
a lot of the workers in my maths class didn't know a lot of the maths terminology to describe what we were talking about ... they needed to understand the terminology (like how to say numbers with decimal points) before they could discuss the maths skills being taught	we went through the words as we came to them

Don't talk too fast and don't talk too much.

Give your explanations at a speed that can be followed and easily understood. Avoid giving extra information that trainees don't need to know and may confuse them.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
some of my trainees have problems understanding my explanations ... I know that they also get flustered with the amount of terminology they are expected to know, and that confuses them further	If I see that they are confused, I slow down, try to use a lot of pauses in my speech and go back over what I've just said as a short summary

Don't assume that trainees know the subject as well as you do.

You can't assume that trainees know much about the subject and you can't assume that trainees all learn the same way. Ask them what they know about the subject before you start and then move on from there. Go back to basics if necessary.

Encourage trainees to use their commonsense in understanding explanations.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
a lot of our workers use calculators in their jobs but really don't know if the answers they get on their calculators are approximately right or not	what we've done in our maths classes is teach them to estimate how accurate those answers are ... then we don't have such huge mistakes with calculations which can cost the company a lot of money

Give new information in small, manageable chunks.

Don't overload trainees with too much information to digest at one time.

Trainer - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
there's no point in telling new workers too much in one go ... they'll never remember it all and they'll just get confused	I start trainees on just checking for their first few days rather than bundling straight away ... that way they get the feel for the shapes and pieces they have to work with before moving on to more complex tasks

Move from simple to more difficult skills.

It makes sense to start with simple explanations in which you can check understanding at a basic level before moving on to more complicated skills.

Trainer - clothing

ISSUE	SOLUTION
training works much better when you start with simple skills and then work up to the more difficult ones	when I start training a new girl, I always start on a brief, where they just trim around the legs and the waist ... they only have 2 measurements to look at ... I know they feel comfortable with that when they stop asking me if their work is OK ... then I give them something more complex and see how they can handle it

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I don't like to start with complicated calculations until I see how they go on the easier ones	I give them a piece of leather to measure up first ... if they can't do that they'll probably have trouble with more difficult calculations

Develop new skills by giving examples of them.

Use examples or models of what you are teaching so that your trainees will have examples of good language, literacy and numeracy skills to refer to.

Trainer - textiles

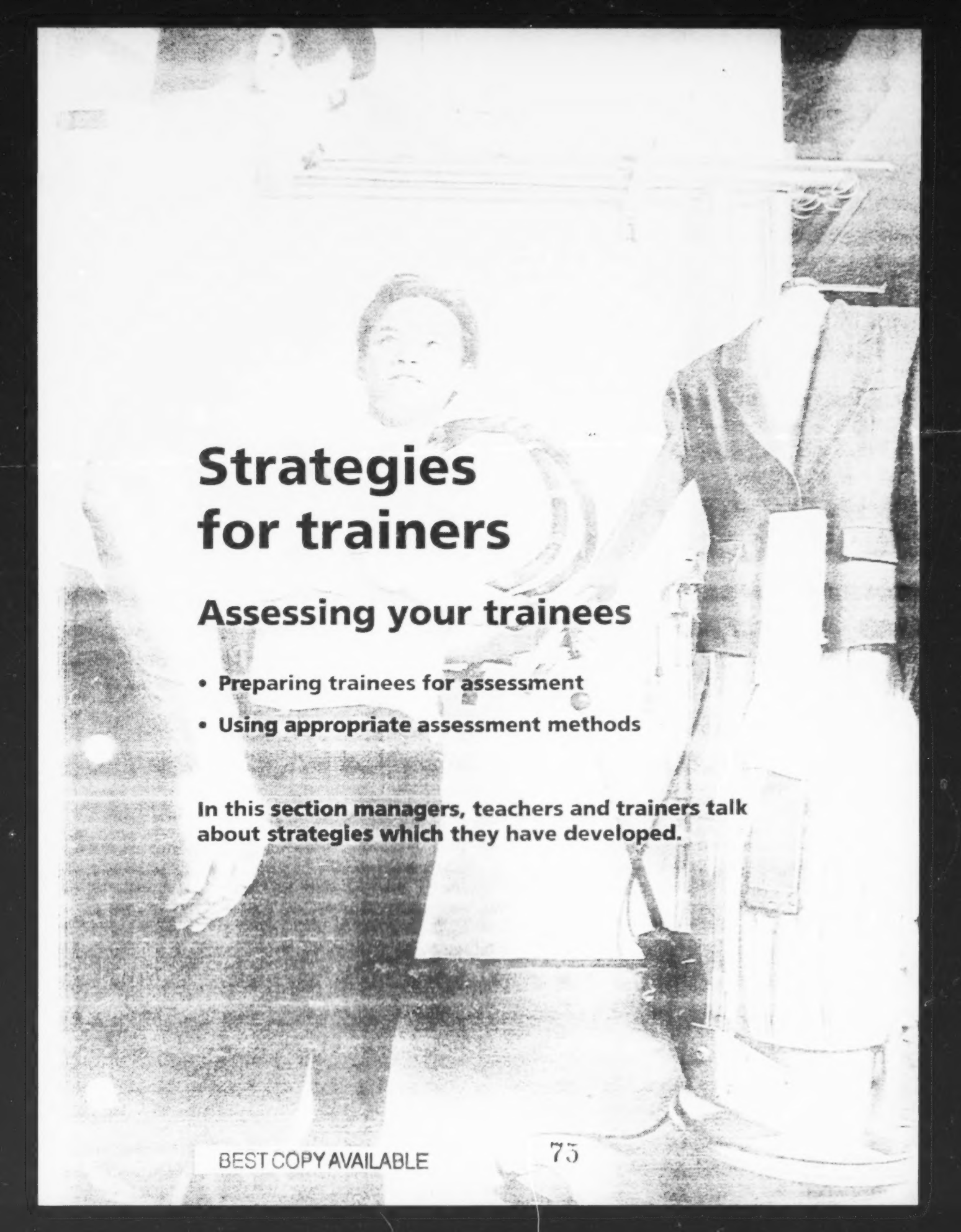
ISSUE	SOLUTION
we expect the workers in our company to do certain calculations so it's only fair to give them examples as we explain to them what they have to do	when I taught the trainees how to fill in production records sheets I gave out worked examples for them to refer to in case they forgot ... they also had their own copy of the chart from which to do the calculations, plus there was a copy at the area where they were working

ISSUE

workers are often nervous when they have to use a new skill ... they like to be given an example of what to do

SOLUTION

I was working with a group of workers who were learning to write clear end-of-shift reports ... we looked at the skills involved in being able to summarise ... when we first practised, I wrote down what they told me ... as they got more confident, they wrote in groups with one person writing what the group dictated ... finally they wrote alone



Strategies for trainers

Assessing your trainees

- **Preparing trainees for assessment**
- **Using appropriate assessment methods**

In this section managers, teachers and trainers talk about strategies which they have developed.

Preparing trainees for assessment

Assessment is the process by which you can find out how much your trainees have learnt.

The TCF industry, companies and unions are currently working on assessment procedures to be used throughout the industry so that workers at all levels can get nationally recognised qualifications. These procedures recognise that many workers in the industry have excellent technical skills but limited language, literacy and numeracy skills.

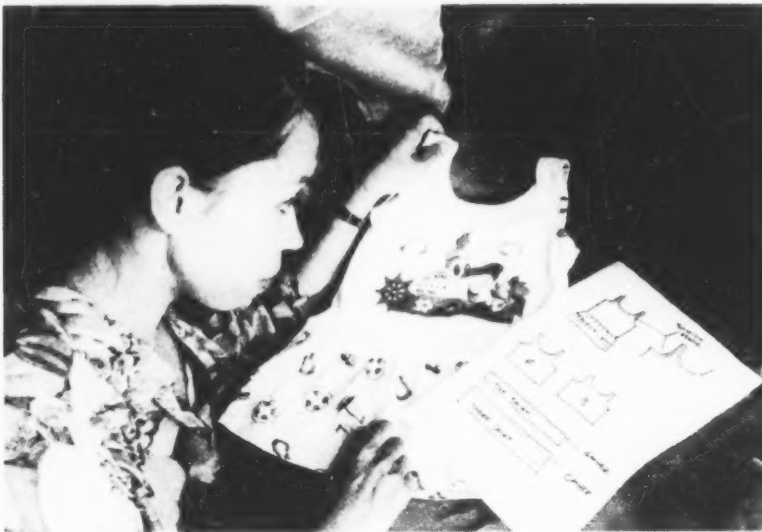
Explain clearly what is being assessed.

Assessment can be valuable to both trainers and trainees as long as everyone is clear about what is being assessed. However it can be a problem if trainees don't understand what is going on.

There is quite a difference between assessing skills and assessing knowledge. Trainees need to be clear about what you are assessing so that they know what to do for assessment.

Prepare trainees for any language, literacy or numeracy skills that will be used in assessment.

Trainees need to be aware of what language, literacy or numeracy skills they are expected to use during their assessment. They may need to practise those skills before the assessment.



Manager - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
some of our workers get really stressed when faced with formal assessments, especially if they need literacy skills to answer questions ... many of them, for example, failed the St John's Ambulance First Aid test when they did it for the first time	we gave them practice tests before they went for it again and most of them passed the second time

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
after new employees finish their induction program, I give them a written test of what they've learned during their training	these trainees are expected to have a certain level of language and literacy skills to do their job ... in the test they get all the details of an imaginary job and they have to fill in a Production Record Sheet for that job ... unless they can fill in the chart, they can't really do their job properly

Explain how assessment will be done.

There are a variety of ways of assessing skills and knowledge.

Appropriate ways of assessing skills are most likely to be:

- demonstration of those skills on the job
- demonstration of those skills in a simulated situation
- examination of samples of work produced by the trainee

Appropriate ways of assessing knowledge are most likely to be:

- oral questions
- practical activities
- written short answer questions
- multiple choice questions

Some of these methods are clearly not suitable for those with language, literacy or numeracy problems. For example multiple choice questions are not a good way to assess people with literacy problems. This type of question requires good literacy skills and sometimes ends up assessing someone's language rather than their knowledge.

If you use a less common way of assessing your trainees' skills or knowledge you may need to explain the method to the trainees.

Computer packages, for example, can be useful to give feedback on computerised training.

Trainer, footwear company

ISSUE	SOLUTION
some of our sewing machine training is done with a computer attached to the sewing machine ... the computer actually records how well or how badly the sewing was done on the machine	this works well as long as it is explained clearly to the trainees

Using appropriate assessment methods

Remember that it is workplace skills and knowledge that are being assessed. Sometimes trainers forget this and end up assessing:

- listening and speaking skills, if a trainee has to give a verbal answer
- reading and writing skills, if a trainee has to give a written answer

You need to assess your trainees in ways that assess their vocational skills combined with relevant language, literacy and numeracy skills.

Choose suitable assessment methods.

Choose methods appropriate to your trainees' skills and the skills necessary for the job. For example there is no point in testing someone's sewing machine skills by giving them a written test. They don't need to be able to write to show that they can do the job.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I taught the trainees to read and interpret tables so that they could adjust coating weights on the coating machine according to the type of material being coated	the assessment of that training was to see if the trainees could read and interpret those same tables ... I asked them questions during the training ... back on the job, they had to decide which table was the right one to use and what the coating weight should be ... adjustments on the machine showed how well they understood what to do

Trainer - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
most of my assessment has to be practical because the job is practical	if I'm assessing whether they can recognise different types of scarring on leather I give them a skin and ask them where the different scars have to go on the shoes

If assessment tasks have been put in writing and trainees can't read them, you could:

- read the information to the trainees
- demonstrate the task to them
- use pictures to illustrate the information

- translate the information into other languages
- put the information on audio tape for the trainees to listen to

Whatever you choose to do, trainees must be able to show what they can do or what they know.

Trainer - textiles

ISSUE	SOLUTION
some trainees with poor language skills felt threatened when managers came on to the line to assess training	when team leaders took over that role the trainees felt less threatened and were able to demonstrate their real language skills in a more relaxed way

Teacher - footwear

ISSUE	SOLUTION
I taught workers some workplace terminology for their jobs ... then I wanted to see how they could use their new skills on the job	there was no need for a formal "test" ... the best way of assessing them was to see how they were using these new skills on the job ... I talked informally to their trainers and supervisors to see how they were going

Appendix

Appendix

Further information

- Workplace training
- Language, literacy and numeracy courses
- Language, literacy and numeracy resources
- Bookshops

Workplace training

Industry Training Boards

Industry Training Boards can provide:

- advice to industry on language, literacy and numeracy training
- advice to industry on the types of training available
- advice on training activities in regions
- assistance in writing submissions

Australian Light Manufacturing Industry Training Advisory Board

First Floor, 132 - 138 Leicester St
CARLTON Vic 3053
Tel: (039) 348 1311 Fax: (039) 349 1637

Textile, Clothing & Footwear Industry Training Board of NSW Ltd

The Regency Square Building
Level 3, 470 Church St
NORTH PARRAMATTA NSW 2151
Tel: (02) 630 4988 Fax: (02) 630 4641

Textile, Clothing Footwear Industry Training Council of Queensland Inc

Industry House
375 Wickham Tce
BRISBANE Qld 4000
Tel: (07) 8311 699 Fax: (07) 832 3195

SA Light Manufacturing Industries Training Board Inc

18 Sutton Terrace
MARLESTON SA 5033
Tel: (08) 371 2685 Fax: (08) 371 2691

Light Manufacturing Industry Training Board of Tasmania

Coats Paton Building
Thistle St West
LAUNCESTON Tas 7250
Tel: (003) 430 362 Fax: (003) 432 165

Victorian Textile, Clothing & Footwear Industry Training Board

Level 2, 15 - 17 Park St
SOUTH MELBOURNE Vic 3205
Tel: (039) 698 4386 Fax: (039) 698 4306

Light Manufacturing Industry Training Council (WA) Inc

Suite 4, 207 Balcatta Rd
BALCATTWA WA 6021
Tel: (09) 240 1048 Fax: (09) 240 1035

NSW Furnishing Industry Training Council

2 Humphreys Lane
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220
Tel: (02) 580 8909 Fax: (02) 580 8992

Queensland Furnishing Industry Training Council

29 Black St
MILTON Qld 4064
Tel: (07) 367 2366 Fax: (07) 367 2376

Victorian Furnishing Industry Training Board

Level 2, 15-17 Park St
SOUTH MELBOURNE Vic 3205
Tel: (03) 698 4328 Fax: (03) 699 4603

TCF Unions

Union officers can provide information to trainers and managers who want language, literacy and numeracy training for employees.

National Textile, Clothing & Footwear Union of Australia (TCFUA)

Level 6, 377 Sussex St
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 264 3588 Fax: (02) 264 5229

National Textile, Clothing & Footwear Union of Australia (TCFUA)

Second Floor, 132 - 138 Leicester St
CARLTON Vic 3053
Tel: (039) 347 2956 or (039) 347 2766 Fax: (039) 347 4049

Textile, Clothing & Footwear Union of Australia, NSW Branch

28 Anglo Rd
CAMPSIE NSW 2194
Tel: (02) 789 4477 [Textile & Footwear] or (02) 789 5233 [Clothing]
Fax: (02) 789 6510

Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia, Qld Branch

Unit 14, Underwood Centrepoint
2962 Logan Rd
UNDERWOOD Qld 4119
Tel: (073) 841 6500 Fax: (073) 841 6455

Textile, Clothing & Footwear Union of Australia, SA Branch

182 Gilles St
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Tel: (08) 223 4627 Fax: (08) 223 5628

Textile, Clothing & Footwear Union of Australia, Tas Branch

83 Frankland St
LAUNCESTON Tas 7250
Tel: (003) 343 008 Fax: (003) 341 089

Textile, Clothing & Footwear Union of Australia, Vic Branch

Ground Floor, 132 - 138 Leicester St
CARLTON Vic 3053
Tel: (039) 347 3377 Fax: (039) 348 1779

Textile, Clothing & Footwear Union of Australia, WA Branch

Room 103, Labor Centre
82 Beaufort St
PERTH WA 6000
Tel: (09) 328 5243 Fax: (09) 227 7406

Funding for language, literacy and numeracy provision

The Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Program provides funding for workplace-based language, literacy and numeracy training and/or resource development projects in industry. The program aims to meet the needs of workers whose level of language, literacy or numeracy skills are creating a barrier to accessing training.

For more information contact:

National Program Manager
Workplace English Language & Literacy Section
Language and Literacy Branch
Department of Employment, Education & Training
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA City ACT 2601

Language, literacy and numeracy courses

For information on language, literacy and numeracy courses contact:

- The Adult Migrant English (Education) Service in your state

NSW

84-86 Mary Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010
Tel: (02) 289 9222
Fax: (02) 289 9995

VICTORIA

Myer House
250 Elizabeth Street
MELBOURNE Vic 3000
Tel: (03) 633 2781
Fax: (03) 663 1130

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Second Floor
Casuarina Plaza
CASUARINA NT 0810
Tel: (089) 278 344
Fax: (089) 450 206

TASMANIA

175 Collins Street
HOBART Tas 7000
Tel: (002) 337 119
Fax: (002) 313 049

QUEENSLAND

First Floor
Phoenix House
333 Adelaide Street
BRISBANE Qld 4000
Tel: (07) 221 5238
Fax: (07) 229 7534

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Renaissance Centre
Fifth Floor
127 Rundle Mall
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Tel: (08) 224 0922
Fax: (08) 232 1826

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Fourth Floor
12 St George's Terrace
PERTH WA 6000
Tel: (09) 220 1600
Fax: (09) 325 6075

- The TAFE college in your local area.
- Community colleges in your local area.

There are also many **private providers** of language, literacy and numeracy courses. Check your local telephone directory for details.

Language, literacy and numeracy resources

Plain English

Communicating in the TCF Industries: A Resource Package

*Australian Textile Clothing and Footwear Industry Training Board
Melbourne, 1994*

Available from: ATCFITB (now the Australian Light Manufacturing ITAB)
First Floor, 132 - 138 Leicester St
CARLTON Vic 3053
Tel (039) 348 1311 Fax (039) 349 1637

This resource package contains:

- **Who to talk to** lists of contacts for advice on communications training in the TCF industry
- **Tips for trainers** gives tips to help managers, supervisors and trainers to plan and deliver workplace training, including a Plain English section on how to present workplace documents in a reader-friendly manner
- **Company collections** of selected printed materials from Actil and Fletcher Jones, giving examples of forms, production sheets, time sheets, posters, handbooks, information sheets and memos. The books explain what to look for in printed material in the workplace and how to improve written communication in your own workplace.

Working Words: a User's Guide to Written Communication at Work

*Jan Kindler, Adult, Community and Further Education Board,
Victoria, 1994*

Available from: Specialist bookshops (see next section)

The book is a resource for people who write workplace documents. It is a guide to making written material easier to write, understand and use. It includes both good and bad examples of workplace memos, notices, operating procedures and training manuals and explains how and why they do and don't work well.

Numeracy

Numeracy on the Line: Language Based Numeracy Activities for Adults

Beth Marr, Chris Anderson and Dave Tout

National Automotive Industry Training Board, Melbourne, 1994

Available from: Specialist bookshops (see next section)

This book has been designed mainly for workplace trainers to meet the needs of trainees in the vehicle manufacturing industry. However most of the activities apply to workers in other industries as well. There are eight sections including work on calculators, decimals, percentages, charts and graphs, and averages.

The Value of Time - numeracy for workers in manufacturing

Ruth Goddard and Margaret Regan

Council of Adult Education, Melbourne, 1995

This book was written for workers in the food processing industry. However it could be useful for adult learners in other industries. There are background notes for trainers and learners and reference wall charts. The book includes sections on calculating time intervals, using a calculator, payslip calculations, graphs and time management.

Strength in Numbers - a resource book for teaching adult numeracy

Ruth Goddard, Beth Marr and Judith Martin

Holmesglen College of TAFE, Victoria, 1991

Available from: Specialist bookshops (see next section)

This book concentrates on basic numeracy skills. It assumes very little knowledge of formal maths teaching and so is ideal for trainers who may not be used to teaching numeracy. Worksheets and activities have been especially designed for adults and the language is suitable for students with low levels of English language and literacy. There are sections on numbers, addition and subtraction, multiplication and division, metrics and money, and simple fractions and percentages.

Language and literacy

In Tempo: an English pronunciation course

Halina Zawadzki

*National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research (NCELTR),
Macquarie University, Sydney, 1994*

Available from: Specialist bookshops (see next section)

In Tempo is a complete, self-paced English pronunciation course which concentrates on the rhythm and stress of Australian English. It is particularly suitable for learners from Asian language backgrounds. The book comes with two ninety-minute audiotapes. It can be used alone by the learner and is suitable for intermediate to advanced level learners. It is not suitable for those at a beginner level.

Accents are Everywhere

Australian Public Commission

Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992

Available from: Specialist bookshops (see next section)

This video has been produced to raise the awareness of managers and supervisors to issues related to accents in the workplace. It raises the issues of: different accents, accents trigger assumptions, communication is a two-way process, valuing diversity in the workplace.

Writing for the Workplace

Barbara Barnard, Liz Griffith and Jenny Kerr

NSW AMES, Sydney, 1994

Available from: Distance Learning Program, AMES
Level 1, 29-31 Belmore St
Burwood NSW 2134

This is a series of five books and cassettes designed to meet the needs of workers with intermediate levels of reading and low levels of writing. The books and cassettes cover the following topics:

- introduction to forms
- leave forms, claim forms and job application forms

- notes and messages
- accident reports
- writing skills

Skillshift CD Rom

Applied Multimedia, NSW AMES, BHP & Pacific Power

Available from: Applied Multimedia
 PO Box 365 North Ryde
 NSW 2113
 Tel (02) 887 3988, (03) 9699 5166 and (09) 388 3223
 and (06) 295 9533

Skillshift is a CD-ROM based multimedia program which develops workplace literacy skills in an interactive way. It is designed for workers with very low literacy skills. It has five modules, each of which is on a separate CD-ROM disk. Each module has between 8 and 12 short lessons and learners work at their own speed to complete the exercises. The five modules are:

- safety signs
- procedures
- notices
- forms
- charts and diagrams

Cross cultural issues

Working It Out

Giselle Mawer and Marilyn Wise
Seven Dimensions, Victoria, 1986

Available from: Specialist bookshops (see next section)

This 18-minute video comes with a booklet. It looks at a number of issues which often come up in multicultural workplaces including safety, work instructions, how to avoid offending workers from other cultures and communicating informally. It analyses typical communication breakdowns, shows why they happen and then gives tips on how to avoid them.

English At Work

Fran Byrnes and Chris Candlin
National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research (NCELTR),
Macquarie University, Sydney, 1991

Available from: Specialist bookshops (see next section)

This is a series of 64 video episodes, each of which highlights a problem or issue relating to working in the Australian context. They focus on misunderstandings and communications breakdowns in particular. It was designed to help workers of non-English speaking backgrounds to communicate in English, learn how to learn in English and to use English more effectively to live and work in Australia in the '90s. It was originally screened on SBS TV. There are accompanying workbooks with worksheets and further information.

Bookshops

NSW

Bridge Bookshop

10 Grafton Street
CHIPPENDALE NSW 2008
Tel: (02) 211 1660
Fax: (02) 211 1868

Language Book Centre

131 York Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 267 1397
Fax: (02) 264 8993

Dymocks

424 George Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 235 0155
Fax: (02) 221 5117

Tertiary and Technical Books

831 George Street
Railway Square NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 211 0561
Fax: (02) 281 5698

QUEENSLAND

Language People

245 Boundary Street
WEST END Qld 4101
Tel: (07) 844 8700
Fax: (07) 846 4168

VICTORIA

TESL Books

397 Little Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE Vic 3000
Tel: (03) 9670 3532
Fax: (03) 9670 3449

Bookery

348 Drummond Street
CARLTON Vic 3053
Tel: (03) 9347 7857
Fax: (03) 9347 7498

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Europa

238 Rundle Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Tel: (08) 223 2289
Fax: (08) 223 5704

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Language Centre

555 Beaufort Street
MOUNT LAWLEY WA 6050
Tel: (09) 328 8965
Fax: (09) 328 6161